Brenda Moraska Lafrancois, Ph.D.

Great Lakes Area Aquatic Ecologist

Brenda Moraska Lafrancois had just completed her dissertation work in ecology and fishery and wildlife biology when she joined the National Park Service as an aquatic ecologist in September 2002. Her position, funded under the Natural Resource Challenge, was developed to provide aquatics expertise for the many water-rich parks of the Great Lakes area. Over the past year, meeting this objective has taken a variety of forms. She has analyzed long-term water quality data for St. Croix National Scenic Riverway (Wisconsin and Minnesota), helped prepare a water resource management plan for Isle Royale National Park (Michigan), and provided assistance and oversight for research projects at Isle Royale, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore (Michigan), and Voyageurs National Park (Minnesota). With Jay Glase, a fisheries biologist hired simultaneously for the same set of parks, Brenda is preparing reports that synthesize aquatic research across Great Lakes parks and working with the Great Lakes Inventory and Monitoring Network to make the reports useful to all the network parks.

As a child in Wisconsin, Brenda spent a lot of time on a river that became increasingly polluted as she was growing up, sparking her interest in water quality. In the summers, on family vacations in the West and Southwest, she always enjoyed visiting national parks. When this position was created—aquatic ecologist in the national parks in her native Midwest—it seemed like the perfect fit for her.

Brenda appreciates the broad perspective her position offers. "I have enjoyed working in this regional context and getting to know a diverse group of aquatic resources and people. Best of all, I like applying my skills to interesting aquatic resource questions and contributing to scientific understanding at a terrific set of parks." ■

brenda_moraska_lafrancois@nps.gov
NPS staff since September 2002
St. Croix Watershed Research Station, NPS Water Resources Division;
Marine on St. Croix, Minnesota

James M. Long, Ph.D.

Fishery Biologist

The Southeast Region is an area with some of the highest biological diversity of aquatic organisms, particularly fish. Therefore, the National Park Service, through the Natural Resource Challenge, created a regional fisheries biologist position. The first specialist to fill that position is Jim Long, and with 64 parks in this region situated in freshwater and marine environments, there is never a shortage of fish-related issues to keep him busy. In 2003, Jim was working on shoal bass restoration at Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (Georgia), assisting Biscayne National Park (Florida) with their developing fisheries management plan, and working with staff and partners of Congaree Swamp National Monument (South Carolina) toward understanding the role of flooding on fish communities and the impacts from reduced flooding due to the operation of an upstream hydroelectric dam.

Jim received his doctorate in wildlife and fisheries ecology from Oklahoma State University in 2000, working on community ecology of black bass in reservoirs. Afterwards, he worked as a research fisheries biologist with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources examining interrelationships between fish communities and physical habitat in wetlands of the Cooper River. Jim brings training and interests in fisheries management, population and community ecology, and statistical methodology to help manage aquatic biodiversity in the parks of the Southeast Region.

With the skills of scientists like Jim Long, we are increasing our understanding and ability to manage these important aquatic environments. "I look forward to meeting these challenges," Jim says, "addressing known fisheries-related issues, and bringing my expertise to the parks to identify unknown issues." ■

jim_long@nps.gov
NPS staff since August 2002
Southeast Region, NPS Water Resources Division;
Atlanta, Georgia